

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, EFIN, EFIS, KU, ID, GY

SUBJECT: VISIT OF JACOB SALIBA TO KUWAIT

REF: STATE 73297 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL ALERTED EMBASSY TO VISIT OF PROMINENT ARAB-AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN JACOB SALIBA, PRESIDENT KATY INDUSTRIES, A CONGLOMERATE WITH VARIED INTERESTS INCLUDING RAILWAYS, ENERGY AND SHRIMP FISHING. BELIEVE SALIBA'S ACTIVITIES HERE COULD EVENTUALLY BEAR FRUIT AND IF SO WILL BE OF INTEREST TO DEPARTMENT AND ADDRESSEE POSTS.

2. SALIBA HAS BEEN HERE FOR FEW DAYS AND WILL REMAIN A WHILE LONGER. HE HAS MET WITH SEVERAL PROMINENT KUWAITIS INCLUDING MEMBERS ROYAL FAMILY. SALIBA HAS ALREADY COME TO KNOW KUWAITI AMBASSADOR TO US SHAIKH SALEM AL-SABAH, SON OF AMIR. AMONG OTHERS HE HAS HELD TALKS WITH SHAIKH NASER AL-SABAH, HEAD UNITED FISHING COMPANY, LARGEST SHRIMP FISHING COMPANY IN WORLD WHICH BASED IN KUWAIT AND HAS WORLD WIDE OPERATIONS. ONE OF KATY INDUSTRIES SUBSIDIARIES IS B-G SHRIMP COMPANIES, ALSO LARGE SHRIMP FISHING ORGANIZATION. B-G'S MAIN AREA OF ACTIVITIES IS OF GUYANA. KATY HAS ALSO RECENTLY BEEN AWARDED MAJOR OIL CONCESSION IN BORNEO.

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3. SALIBA IS SEEKING FUNDS (SOMETHING ON ORDER OF \$10 MILLION)

TO HELP HIS COMPANY, TOGETHER WITH UNION OIL OF CALIFORNIA, WHICH APPARENTLY SHARES BORNEO CONCESSION, TO EXPLOIT INDONESIAN OIL FIELDS. IN ADDITION HE PROPOSING PROVIDE MANAGEMENT PACKAGE TO UNITED FISHERIES WHICH PRESENTLY OPERATING IN RED AND HAS ALMOST A THIRD OF ITS 160-ODD BOAT FLEET IDLE. HE ALSO HOPES WITH ASSISTANCE OF KUWAITIS TO EXPAND B-G'S OPERATIONS INTO SURINAM, FRENCH GUYANA AND BRAZIL OFF OF WHICH APPARENTLY ARE RICH SHRIMP GROUNDS. IN SHORT, SALIBA LOOKING TOWARD ESTABLISHING NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH KUWAITIS BY WHICH A MAJOR KUWAITI COMPANY WOULD STRAIGHTEN ITSELF OUT AND BY WHICH KATY COULD PURSUE ITS OWN AMBITIOUS PROJECTS IN SOUTH AMERICA AND INDONESIA WITH KUWAITI FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

4. COMMENT: SALIBA'S TALKS WITH KUWAITIS ARE STILL IN EARLY STAGE, BUT HE COMES HERE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BY AMBASSADOR SALEM. MOREOVER, HE IS IN POSITION OFFER SOMETHING OF REAL VALUE TO KUWAITIS BOTH IN TERMS OF SERVICES TO UNITED FISHERIES AND IN TERMS INTERESTING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES. WE THINK, THEREFORE, THERE REASONABLY GOOD CHANCE HE MAY SUCCEED. IF SO HIS OWN CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER AMERICAN INDUSTRIALISTS (HE HAS AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER HEADED THREE MAJOR US COMPANIES) AND AS A LEADING ARAB-AMERICAN, A GROUP OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST TO MANY COMMERCIALLY ACTIVE KUWAITIS INCLUDING AMBASSADOR SALEM, WILL PROVIDE HIM BASE FROM WHICH TO APPROACH KUWAITIS WITH OTHER BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT PROPOSALS. HE ADMITTED TO EMBOFF THIS HIS DESIRE, SHOULD INITIAL PROPOSALS WORK OUT SUCCESSFULLY. WHILE TOO EARLY TO SAY FOR CERTAIN, WE THINK POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT SALIBA COULD BECOME IMPORTANT LINK BETWEEN AMERICAN AND KUWAITI BUSINESS COMMUNITIES.
STOLTZFUS

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